



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATION AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Numbers: 3012320

Applicant Name: Brenda Barnes with Clark Design Group

Address of Proposal: 3926 Aurora Avenue North

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIONS

Land Use Application to allow a four-story hotel with 120 units. Parking for 121 vehicles will be located below grade. Review includes 16,000 cubic yards of grading.

The following approvals are required:

Design Review - Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 23.41

SEPA - Environmental Determination pursuant to SMC 25.05

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS
☒ DNS with conditions*
☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or
involving another agency with jurisdiction.

* Notice of the Early Determination of Non-significance was published on March 8, 2012.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to design and construct a four-story hotel with 120 hotel rooms and 121 parking spaces.

The applicant presented three alternative design schemes at the EDG meeting. Each of the schemes illustrates a sizeable drop-off area with two curb cuts and canopy approximately in the middle of the Aurora block. Each option also shows a four-story building with a parking plinth on the southern half (visible on the south and east elevations) and three stories of hotel rooms. The northern half of the proposed structure houses semi-public rooms for hotel guests (meeting rooms, exercise room and pool, business center) and three floors of hotel rooms above it. The hotel parking garage is accessed from the alley. Option A, shaped like an elongated “I” has a central wing housing the entry and lobby area behind an extended drop-off area. Two smaller, perpendicular wings flank the central wing on the north and south. These approach both the east (alley) and west (Aurora Ave) property lines. Behind the central wing, the designers locate an outdoor patio area and a narrow bank of open space along the east property line.

For Option B, the hotel program remains essentially the same. In plan, the building shape resembles a squared-off number “2”. The guest drop-off area, located slightly toward the north along Aurora Ave., extends deeper into the site pushing the lobby roughly 55 feet from Aurora Ave. Guest services remain located along the north end of the site near grade along Aurora Ave. and N. 40th St. Similar to Option A, the parking garage reveals itself near the houses bordering on the south and along the east property line.

Option C modifies the approach of Option B. The curb cuts and the guest drop-off occur toward the south end of the site facing Aurora. The bulk of accessory uses (meeting rooms, pool and exercise room) lies north of the entrance. Similar to the second option, the drop-off area is deeper and quite wide to accommodate buses from the expected cruise ship business. The northern mass comes directly out to Aurora Ave. and N. 40th St. The southern section, which appears to interlock with the northern half at the center of the site, steps back to accommodate the drop-off area and forms a large wall that approaches the south property line and then turns to the alley.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant had refined the project to move the vehicular entry in the alley slightly to the north. The applicant explained that moving it very far to the north would result in internal ramping to either remove the patio or break the connections between the lobby and the outdoor patio. An additional garage entry was added from the entry plaza drive, in order to reduce the vehicle trips on the alley by 26%. The entry plaza will also accommodate vehicles such as cars, taxis, and tour busses.

In response to Seattle Department of Transportation comments, the Aurora Ave N public right of way showed a wider landscape buffer between the curb and sidewalk with reduced landscaping between the sidewalk and building.

The applicant placed hotel amenity areas such as a fitness room, pool, and meeting rooms at the Aurora Ave N and N. 40th St. frontages and located the pool farther below grade than the other amenities in order to provide pool users with a sense of comfort. The building would be set back at the southeast corner to provide a landscaped buffer for hotel rooms at grade.

The area near the south property line showed an emergency access with a decorative fence to provide security.

A series of three tiered planters with landscaping were proposed to provide privacy and separation for residents across the alley by interrupting the visual connection between the patio and the alley.

The alley façade included a garage wall, a trash/recycling entry, and ornamental stone walls with landscaping separating the patio/courtyard from the alley. The alley slope would result in the guest rooms facing the alley to be located at least 8' above the alley surface. The south half of the alley facing façade included hotel rooms above grade. The north half (north of the garage entry) included amenity spaces close to grade.

The proposed materials attempt to accentuate the idea of 'peeling back' the harder edge at Aurora to the interior of the site. The street level façade included increased transparency and exposed columns. Materials include stucco panel in three brown/beige colors and ornamental stone. The stucco board was chosen because it sheds dirt, which is needed at Aurora Ave N. The street level included a bronze finish storefront window with dark brown vinyl windows on the upper level hotel rooms.

The applicant explained that the company's Staybridge signage would be used, even though the architectural style departs from the company's typical architectural style. The lighting plan showed direct sconces at Aurora and 40th St, with fully shielded lighting at the alley facing residences.

The massing steps down with grade with a taller mass north of the courtyard entry and a smaller 3-story mass near the south property line.

Landscape plans included a rooftop deck as well as planting at grade to soften the edge at Aurora and reduce the traffic noise. The interior courtyard included a fireplace and planting. Lighted bollards would be used at the courtyard entry, with surface paving treatments for interest. The surface would have a smooth finish to avoid noise from rolling luggage.

The rooftop deck would be located at the southeast corner to take advantage of the views to downtown, Mt. Rainier, and Lake Union. The roof deck may also include a gravel dog run or off-leash area near the southwest corner. Pavers would be used at the roof deck surface, with larger planters and trees at the north, east, and west edges of the roof deck. The southeast corner of the rooftop deck was left open to take advantage of the views.

The southwest corner of the site would include rain gardens, low stepped retaining walls, and landscaping to buffer the interior of the site from Aurora Ave N.

SITE & VICINITY

Located at the southeast corner of Aurora Avenue North and North 40th Street, the 36,273 sq. ft. property extends approximately 300 linear feet on Aurora and roughly 114 feet along N. 40th St. The site lies within a Commercial One (C1 40) with a 40 foot height limit zone. The terrain descends roughly 16' from the northwest corner to the southeast. Along N. 40th the slope falls toward the east approximately six feet. Structures on the site have been demolished.

The site lies along the Aurora Ave. N. corridor. Commercial and single and multifamily residential uses front onto the Aurora Ave corridor. To the south of the site, three houses border the subject property. Mostly two and three story multifamily apartments and townhouses sit to the east on the other side of the alley. Larger four-story commercial and multifamily buildings line Aurora Ave across N. 40th St. and N 39th St. A vacant parcel occupies the southeast corner of Aurora and N. 39th Streets. To the west, an eclectic mix of single family, small scale retail and office buildings are assembled on Aurora

ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW

Public Comments

Approximately 17 members of the public affixed their names to the mailing list. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

Impacts on the alley:

- Ensure that the lighting on the alley does not spillover onto the other properties yet the lighting must help keep the alley secure.
- There should be green space on the back side near the alley.
- The traffic from the hotel will impact the tenants east of the alley.
- The hotel will produce increased amounts of noise (garage door), car headlights and other lights on to the alley and the neighboring residences. (mentioned several times)
- The applicant has not provided any visual information about the back side of the proposal.
- Do not place a blank wall along the alley.
- The alley is too narrow for the amount of vehicles required to use it.
- The alley serves as an incubator for crime, theft and graffiti.

Security:

- The project should be secure from drug dealers and addicts who thrive on the Aurora Ave. corridor.
- The rooms shown at grade are susceptible to drug dealers.

Programming:

- The plans show very little green space compared to the previous multifamily proposal.
- The project doesn't add anything to the neighborhood. Will there be public rooms available for rent?
- Provide drawings of the garden.

GUIDELINES

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponent, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the siting and design guidance described below and identified highest priority by letter and number from the guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "Design Review: Guidelines for Multi-family and Commercial Buildings".

PRIORITIES

A Site Planning

- A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.**

Concept C's broken and interlocking building mass begins to adjust to the site's significant north/south slope. It is possible that by further accentuating the height differences the building would provide more visual drama from the streetscape.

- A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.**

In this circumstance, the proposal ought to be an example of not only how to do a building correctly on a major arterial but also how it appropriately transitions to a lower scale neighborhood.

- A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.**

The Board acknowledged that Concept C provides the formal entrance with the most exposure from Aurora Ave. Although the architect rendered an entry canopy on all of the concept drawings, she conveyed doubt as to whether a canopy or porte cochere would be included in the proposal.

- A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

In particular the facades facing the N. 40th St. and Aurora Ave. N. street edges should possess a human scale that encourages pedestrian activity. Landscaping will complement the architect's intention of providing both a safe and meaningful pedestrian experience.

- A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.**

The Board will give careful review of the building's relationship to the properties to the south and east at the Recommendation meeting. It is important that the building convey sensitivity to the transition to the next zone.

- A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.**

See Board guidance for D-8.

- A-10 Corner Lots. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

Locating the most public rooms at the northwest corner and along both street frontages ought to enhance the building's relationship to the neighborhood. Increased transparency will acknowledge the corner without calling unnecessary attention to it. Having this corner of the first floor sunk below sidewalk grade may be problematic.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

- B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility.** Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

The Board supported Concept C as the most viable of the massing studies. The interlocking volumes, with the southern mass pushed away from Aurora Ave., relieves drivers and pedestrians on Aurora from enduring a 320 foot long wall.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- C-1 Architectural Context.** New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

The Aurora Ave. corridor possesses an eclectic mix of land uses and building styles. Newer structures tend toward decorated sheds sited close to the street front. Older structures include single family houses expanded and converted to commercial uses and older one and two story commercial structures. Unlike Aurora Ave. as it passes through the City of Shoreline, there are little public amenities or landscaping that unify the streetscape.

- C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency.** Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

- C-3 Human Scale.** The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.

This guidance, particularly relevant for the structure's relationship to the street edges and the alley, encourages the applicant to provide pedestrian amenities and architectural features that create a strong sense of place.

- C-4 Exterior Finish Materials.** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

The choice and compositional arrangement of exterior materials will reflect the desire of the applicant to provide a building that addresses two important scales--- the pedestrian / hotel guest and the vehicular oriented Aurora corridor.

- C-5 Structured Parking Entrances.** The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

The Board urged the applicant to explore locating the garage entrance to the northern half of the alley which would lessen the impact of the potentially considerable hotel traffic on

the alley and the neighbors. Acknowledging the potential for added project costs, the Board reserves judgment until the architect provides studies exploring alternative garage access locations.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances.** Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

The Board emphasized the special importance of this guidance. Both the public open space near the building entrance (an extension of the lobby) and the more private garden for the hotel guests must feel secure yet not so fortress like that it inhibits the potential for social life. The project offers intriguing spatial and landscape possibilities that visually connect the entrance, lobby, great room and outdoor patio. Enhancing the flow through these spaces would provide a series of related indoor and outdoor courts that give resonance to the ancillary pool, exercise and meeting rooms.

- D-2 Blank Walls.** Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

See Board comments for Guideline D-5.

- D-3 Retaining Walls.** Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures.** The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

Concept drawings show portions of the garage visible to neighbors on the south and east. The walls and garage door should not be an afterthought but carefully designed and integrated into the building's overall design concept.

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas.** Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

The architect indicated her intention of locating the waste and recycling storage area in or near the garage accessed from the alley.

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

The Board shared the neighbors' concerns for providing a safe and secure environment. The applicant must give careful consideration to how criminal activity occurs in the vicinity and convey how the hotel's programming and design enhances personal safety and security without creating defensible spaces that resemble a fortress. The design of the proposal should encourage the guests to walk into Fremont or along Stone Way N. Intelligent integration of lighting design, location of open spaces, landscaping, building transparency, and placement of entrances contribute to an environment beneficial to the neighbors, the hotel guests and employees.

The architect should consider the in-between, less exposed spaces that potentially harbor illicit activity. The design should evidence that the spaces between the hotel and the south property line and the alley are both secure and respectful of adjacent properties. In addition, the Board asks how the applicant resolves the issue of placing guest rooms at grade on the south end.

Where the sidewalk meets the two curb cuts along Aurora Ave, the pedestrian pathway across the two ends of the semi-circular driveway should have a visual signal such as a separate texture or striping that warns the drivers of pedestrians.

D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.

The alley acts as an interface between two zones (lowrise and commercial) with distinctly different purposes. Design of the alley façade and the building's various function rooms along the alley should recognize the alley's use by neighbors and the fact that a considerable number of residents' primary view looks toward the proposed hotel.

D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.

The Board urged the applicant to provide signage in the spirit of the old roadside, Highway 99 signs. The Board has the authority to recommend signage that goes beyond the brand signs for lodging and commercial uses. The Board expects to see an exploration of alternative designs. Consider, as well, designs that could be integrated into the building concept. More than most projects, this project should have great commercial signage---something that people will want to see.

D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.

A well developed lighting plan is required for the Recommendation meeting. This plan must address light and glare and light spillage on to neighboring properties. Examples of light fixtures should be included in the Recommendation packet. The quality of lighting along the three rights of way is critical to pedestrian and neighborhood security.

D-11 Commercial Transparency. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.

The architect should provide a considerable amount of transparency along N. 40th St. and Aurora Ave. N. for the most public areas of the extended stay hotel. This will provide a greater connection between the hotel and the neighborhood.

E. Landscaping

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site. Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

Look at providing a landscape buffer along the alley. Raised planters or some other built up edge could be appropriate.

E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

MASTER USE PERMIT APPLICATION

The applicant revised the design and applied for a Master Use Permit with a design review component on February 15, 2012.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Design Review Board conducted a Final Recommendation Meeting on June 4, 2012 to review the applicant's formal project proposal developed in response to the previously identified priorities. At the public meetings, site plans, elevations, floor plans, landscaping plans, and computer renderings of the proposed exterior materials were presented for the Board members' consideration.

Public Comments

Ten members of the public affixed their names to the mailing list. Speakers at the forum raised the following issues:

- The design should respond to the residences to the south (at N. 39th St); it appears to only respond to the conditions to the north and east.
- The location of the rooftop terrace impacts the privacy of adjacent backyards to the south and southeast.
- If the project butts up to the alley, it doesn't leave enough alley width for circulation, given existing surface parking for residents across the alley (several comments listing concerns of adequate traffic circulation in the alley).
- Rapid ride may not be able to stop on this block due to this new development.
- On-street parking will be lost with the curb cuts on Aurora.
- Removal of trees on site would be unfortunate.

- There should be sufficient loading area for delivery vehicles in the alley.
- There should be sufficient trash/recycling storage and access.

Deliberation

- Garage entrance: (A-4, A-5, A-8, C-5, D-2, D-8, D-11)
 - The Board discussed the proposed garage entry and the various diagrams of alternate garage locations shown by the applicant.
 - The Board noted that there may be other garage entry locations not shown by the applicant that could locate the garage entry further north than the preferred alternative, which would reduce impacts to nearby neighbors.
 - The Board recommended a condition related to further study of this item, and left the decision to the DPD Land Use Planner.
 - The Board noted that the result should minimize vehicular impacts to nearby residential neighbors and should allow for maximum transparency and human activity at the N. 40th St façade.
- Material articulation (materials) how it relates to the architectural concept (A-2, C-2, C-4)
 - The concept of peeling the orange is appropriate
 - The Board noted a preference for a consistent application of materials and expression (orientation of columns same direction, etc.), but declined to make a specific recommended condition about this item.
 - The Board noted that a metal panel shell would be more consistent with the ‘peeling an orange’ architectural concept, but a smooth panel would achieve a similar visual impression. The Board recommended a smooth panel on the shell of the structure.
- Roof deck (A-5, E-3)
 - The Board noted that the view from the rooftop deck will only be visible when people are standing, and the lack of landscaped buffer near the southwest corner of the deck may result in patrons gathering at the edge of the deck and increasing the impacts to privacy of neighboring residences.
 - The Board noted that a 6-8’ planting buffer with low plants at the edge would maintain views for standing roof deck users, but provide some privacy for residents to the south and east.
 - The Board recommended a condition to provide a landscaped buffer edge at the roof deck. The applicant should demonstrate to the LU Planner how the landscape buffer will interrupt sight lines to adjacent residences but provide views of the skyline for hotel users.
 - The Board noted that another option is to locate the roof deck further north on the building, to the higher four-story module. This would provide clear views and minimize privacy impacts to adjacent neighbors.
- Transition to edge conditions (commercial zone adjacent to lower zone, and single family residences/duplex uses) (A-2, B-1, C-2, C-4, E-2, E-3)
 - The Board acknowledged that the alley facing patio helps to reduce height bulk and scale impacts to adjacent residents
 - Maintenance of landscaping is crucial.

Board Recommendations: The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans submitted at the June 4th, 2012 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as presented in the plans and other drawings available at the June 4th public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the four Design Review Board members present unanimously recommended approval of the subject design.

The Board recommended the following **CONDITIONS** for the project. (Authority referenced in the letter and number in parenthesis):

1. Locate the garage entry at the north end of the alley, or design the garage access to allow exiting only to the north. The N. 40th façade should retain maximum transparency and human activity. (A-4, A-5, A-8, C-5, D-2, D-8, D-11)
2. The applicant shall demonstrate to the DPD Land Use Planner how the garage entry relates to the overall building program, and the Land Use Planner shall determine which alley garage entry results in the design that better meets the Design Review Guidelines. (A-4, A-5, A-8, C-5, D-2, D-8, D-11)
3. The courtyard garage entry should be designed to encourage most of the access to the garage. (A-4, A-5, A-8, C-5, D-2, D-8, D-11)
4. The building shell material shall be revised to include a smooth panel rather than a textured panel. (A-2, C-2, C-4)
5. Provide a landscaped buffer edge at the south and west edges of the roof deck. The applicant shall demonstrate to the LU Planner how the landscape buffer will interrupt sight lines to adjacent residences but provide views of the skyline for hotel users. (A-5, E-3)

DIRECTOR'S ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW

The Director finds no conflicts with SEPA requirements or state or federal laws, and has reviewed the City-wide Design Guidelines and finds that the Board neither exceeded its authority nor applied the guidelines inconsistently in the approval of this design. The Director agrees with the conditions recommended by the four Board members and the recommendation to approve the design, as stated above.

DECISION - DESIGN REVIEW

The proposed design is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant on February 15, 2012. The information in the checklist, project plans, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision. The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665 D) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The Overview Policy states in part: "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation" (subject to some limitations). Under certain limitations and/or circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

Short-term Impacts

Construction activities could result in the following adverse impacts: construction dust and storm water runoff, erosion, emissions from construction machinery and vehicles, increased particulate levels, increased noise levels, occasional disruption of adjacent vehicular and pedestrian traffic, a small increase in traffic and parking impacts due to construction related vehicles, and increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Several construction-related impacts are mitigated by existing City codes and ordinances applicable to the project such as: the Noise Ordinance, the Stormwater Grading and Drainage Control Code, the Street Use Ordinance, and the Building Code. The following is an analysis of construction-related noise, air quality, earth, grading, construction impacts, traffic and parking impacts as well as its mitigation.

Noise

Noise associated with construction of the mixed use building and future phases could adversely affect surrounding uses in the area, which include residential and commercial uses. Surrounding uses are likely to be adversely impacted by noise throughout the duration of construction activities. Due to the proximity of the project site to residential uses, the limitations of the Noise Ordinance are found to be inadequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts. Pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC.25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675 B), mitigation is warranted.

Prior to issuance of demolition, grading and building permits, the applicant will submit a construction noise mitigation plan. This plan will include steps 1) to limit noise decibel levels and duration and 2) procedures for advanced notice to surrounding properties. The plan will be subject to review and approval by DPD. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby properties, all construction activities shall be limited to the following:

- 1) Non-holiday weekdays between 7:00 A.M and 6:00 P.M.
- 2) Non-holiday weekdays between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
- 3) Saturdays between 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
- 4) Emergencies or work which must be done to coincide with street closures, utility interruptions or other similar necessary events, limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.

Air Quality

Construction for this project is expected to add temporarily particulates to the air that will result in a slight increase in auto-generated air contaminants from construction activities, equipment and worker vehicles; however, this increase is not anticipated to be significant. Federal auto emission controls are the primary means of mitigating air quality impacts from motor vehicles as stated in the Air Quality Policy (Section 25.05.675 SMC). To mitigate impacts of exhaust fumes on the directly adjacent residential uses, trucks hauling materials to and from the project site will not be allowed to queue on streets or the alley under windows of the nearby residential buildings.

Earth

The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code requires preparation of a soils report to evaluate the site conditions and provide recommendations for safe construction on sites where grading will involve cuts or fills of greater than three feet in height or grading greater than 100 cubic yards of material.

The soils report, construction plans, and shoring of excavations as needed, will be reviewed by the DPD Geo-technical Engineer and Building Plans Examiner who will require any additional soils-related information, recommendations, declarations, covenants and bonds as necessary to assure safe grading and excavation. This project constitutes a "large project" under the terms of the SGDCC (SMC 22.802.015 D). As such, there are many additional requirements for erosion control including a provision for implementation of best management practices and a requirement for incorporation of an engineered erosion control plan which will be reviewed jointly by the DPD building plans examiner and geo-technical engineer prior to issuance of the permit. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Grading

Excavation to construct the mixed use structure will be necessary. The maximum depth of the excavation is approximately 26 feet and will consist of an estimated 16,000 cubic yards of material. The soil removed will not be reused on the site and will need to be disposed off-site by trucks. City code (SMC 11.74) provides that material hauled in trucks not be spilled during transport. The City requires that a minimum of one foot of "freeboard" (area from level of material to the top of the truck container) be provided in loaded uncovered trucks which minimize the amount of spilled material and dust from the truck bed enroute to or from a site. Future phases of construction will be subject to the same regulations. No further conditioning of the grading/excavation element of the project is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Construction Impacts

Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

Traffic and Parking

Duration of construction of the apartment building may last approximately 18 months. During construction, parking demand will increase due to additional demand created by construction personnel and equipment. It is the City's policy to minimize temporary adverse impacts associated with construction activities and parking (SMC 25.05.675 B and M). Parking utilization along streets in the vicinity is near capacity and the demand for parking by construction workers during construction could reduce the supply of parking in the vicinity. Due to the large scale of the project, this temporary demand on the on-street parking in the vicinity due to construction workers' vehicles may be adverse. Upon completion of the parking garage, construction workers shall park in the garage. In order to minimize adverse impacts, the applicant will need to provide a construction worker parking plan to reduce on-street parking until the new garage is constructed and safe to use. The authority to impose this condition is found in Section 25.05.675B2g of the Seattle SEPA Ordinance.

The construction of the project also will have adverse impacts on both vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the vicinity of the project site. During construction a temporary increase in traffic volumes to the site will occur, due to travel to the site by construction workers and the transport of construction materials. Approximately 16,000 cubic yards of soil are expected to be excavated from the project site. The soil removed for the garage structure will not be reused on the site and will need to be disposed off-site. Excavation and fill activity will require approximately 1,600 round trips with 10-yard hauling trucks or 800 round trips with 20-yard hauling trucks. Considering the large volumes of truck trips anticipated during construction, it is reasonable that truck traffic avoid the afternoon peak hours. Large (greater than two-axle) trucks will be prohibited from entering or exiting the site after 3:30 PM.

Compliance with Seattle's Street Use Ordinance is expected to mitigate any additional adverse impacts to traffic which would be generated during construction of this proposal.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased surface water runoff due to greater site coverage by impervious surfaces; increased bulk and scale on the site; increased traffic in the area; increased demand for parking; and increased light and glare.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site collection of stormwater with provisions for controlled tightline release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long-term impacts and no further conditioning is warranted by SEPA policies. However, due to the size and location of this proposal, green house gas emissions, traffic, parking impacts and public view protection warrant further analysis.

Public View Protection

SEPA public view protection policy is stated in SMC 25.05.675P. In order to protect views of Seattle's natural and built surroundings, the City has developed particular sites and corridors for public enjoyment of views. The potential obstruction of public views may occur, specifically in this case, when a proposed structure is located in "close proximity to the street property line, when development occurs on lots situated at the foot of a street that terminates or changes direction because of a shift in the street grid patterns, or when a development along a street creates a continuous wall separating the street from the view." The Code enumerates views to specific natural and human made features worth preserving. The site's frontage on Aurora Ave N. sits along a designated scenic corridor. Analysis projecting a representation of the proposed building within the corridor illustrates that some occlusion or blockage to the views of downtown and St. Mark's Cathedral would occur; however, DPD does not consider the view blockage significant.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the project's energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

Traffic and Transportation

The proposed hotel would produce 555 new daily trips, 43 AM and 49 PM peak hour trips. These trips reflect average annual occupancy. At full occupancy, the PM peak hour trips are 66 total vehicles. According to the distribution percentages for the PM commute peak hour, the assignment of trips implies that the majority of the trips will be to and from the northeast via North 40th St. Of the trips entering the site during the PM peak hour, six will likely use the auto courtyard to enter the garage and 15 will enter the garage from the alley.

The peak vehicular traffic activity on the alley can be estimated during the PM peak hour. Between the garage access and N. 40th St., it is estimated that there would be 11 trips southbound and five northbound. Between the garage and N. 39th St, it is estimated there would be 12 trips southbound and four trips northbound. In both cases, the total project volume is 16 trips for the peak hour. The impacts are not expected to be significantly impact parking or levels of service in the neighborhood.

Parking

The required parking for a hotel of this type is one space for each four rooms. The minimum supply required per code would be approximately 30 stalls. The hotel proposes to supply 120 spaces or a ration of 1:1.

In addition to parking provided on site, parking is permitted on the surrounding streets. Considering only on-street parking on Aurora Ave, the existing conditions with the current curb cuts would allow for up to 14 legal on-street parking spaces. With the proposed redevelopment of the site and minimizing the curb cuts from four to two, the estimated on-street parking would increase to 15 stalls.

Summary

In conclusion, several adverse effects on the environment are anticipated resulting from the proposal, which are anticipated to be non-significant. The conditions imposed below are intended to mitigate construction impacts identified in the foregoing analysis, or to control impacts not regulated by codes or ordinances, per adopted City policies.

DECISION - SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 2C.
- [] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 2C.

CONDITIONS – DESIGN REVIEW

Prior to MUP Issuance

Revise plans sets to show:

1. Locate the garage entry at the north end of the alley, or design the garage access to allow exiting only to the north. The N. 40th façade should retain maximum transparency and human activity.
2. The applicant shall demonstrate to the DPD Land Use Planner how the garage entry relates to the overall building program, and the Land Use Planner shall determine which alley garage entry results in the design that better meets the Design Review Guidelines.
3. The courtyard garage entry should be designed to encourage most of the access to the garage.
4. The building shell material shall be revised to include a smooth panel rather than a textured panel.
5. Provide a landscaped buffer edge at the south and west edges of the roof deck. The applicant shall demonstrate to the Land Use Planner how the landscape buffer will interrupt sight lines to adjacent residences but provide views of the skyline for hotel users.

Prior to Building Application

6. Include the departure matrix in the zoning summary section on all subsequent building permit plans. Add call-out notes on appropriate plan and elevation drawings in the updated MUP plans and on all subsequent building permit plans.

Prior to Commencement of Construction

7. Arrange a pre-construction meeting with the building contractor, building inspector, and land use planner to discuss expectations and details of the Design Review component of the project.

Prior to Issuance of all Construction Permits

8. Embed the MUP conditions in the cover sheet for all subsequent permits including updated building permit drawings.

Prior to Issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy

9. Compliance with all images and text on the MUP drawings, design review meeting guidelines and approved design features and elements (including exterior materials, landscaping and ROW improvements) shall be verified by the DPD planner assigned to this project (Bruce P. Rips, 206.615-1392). An appointment with the assigned Land Use Planner must be made at least five (5) working days in advance of field inspection. The Land Use Planner will determine whether submission of revised plans is required to ensure that compliance has been achieved.

For the Life of the Project

10. Any proposed changes to the exterior of the building or the site or must be submitted to DPD for review and approval by the Land Use Planner (Bruce Rips, 206.615-1392). Any proposed changes to the improvements in the public right-of-way must be submitted to DPD and SDOT for review and for final approval by SDOT.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Issuance of a Demolition, Grading, or Building Permit

11. A construction traffic management plan shall be submitted to DPD and SDOT prior to the beginning of construction. This plan will identify construction worker parking and construction materials staging area; truck access routes to and from the site for excavation and construction phases; and sidewalk and street closures with neighborhood notice and posting procedures.

During Construction

12. Grading, delivery and pouring of concrete and similar noisy activities will be prohibited on Saturdays and Sundays. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby residences, only the low noise impact work such as that listed below, will be permitted on Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.:
 - A. Surveying and layout.
 - B. Testing and tensioning P. T. (post tensioned) cables, requiring only hydraulic equipment (no cable cutting allowed).
 - C. Other ancillary tasks to construction activities will include site security, surveillance, monitoring, and maintenance of weather protecting, water dams and heating equipment.
13. In addition to the Noise Ordinance, requirements to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby properties, all construction activities shall be limited to the following:
 - A. Non-holiday weekdays between 7:00 A.M and 6:00 P.M.
 - B. Non-holiday weekdays between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
 - C. Saturdays between 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
 - D) Emergencies or work which must be done to coincide with street closures, utility interruptions or other similar necessary events, limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
14. Large (greater than two-axle) trucks will be prohibited from entering or exiting the site after 3:30 PM.
15. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition.

Compliance with all applicable conditions must be verified and approved by the Land Use Planner, Bruce Rips, (206-615-1392) at the specified development stage, as required by the Director's decision. The Land Use Planner shall determine whether the condition requires submission of additional documentation or field verification to assure that compliance has been achieved.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: October 4, 2012
Bruce P. Rips, AAIA, AICP
Department of Planning and Development